

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute the following claims for the same-numbered claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for modifying images ~~characterized in that it includes~~ having the ability to assign ~~colour~~ color intensity values to pixels exposed during image manipulation operations, said system comprising:

[[-]] means for using the color intensity values of remaining pixels in the original image, and

[[-]] means for assigning color values to the exposed pixels that are similar to those of the surrounding pixels so that the exposed regions ~~blends~~ blend smoothly with the surrounding region[[.]], wherein said means for assigning color values assigns a color value to an exposed pixel equal to the color intensity value of a mirror-image pixel of said exposed pixel.

2. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 1, including means for assigning color values when pixels are exposed due to manual modifications of the image.

3. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 1, including means for assigning color values when the pixels are exposed due to automatic modifications of said image.

4. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said means for assigning ~~colour~~ color values assigns the value of ~~colour~~ color intensity based on the ~~colour~~ color intensity value function determined at ~~that pixel's~~ a location of said exposed pixel.

5. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 4, wherein the said color intensity value function used to assign values to exposed pixels is determined using the image model available a-priori.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Canceled).

8. (Canceled).

9. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said ~~means for assigning colour values~~ assigns a colour value to an exposed pixel equal to the color intensity value of its mirror-image pixel is found by looking into a hypothetical mirror placed along the boundary of the exposed region.

10. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said means for assigning ~~colour~~ color values segments the original image to restrict the pixels, which are used to assign intensity values to the exposed pixels by using:

[[-]] means for copying the intensity value from only that pixel location that belongs to the same segment as the boundary pixel which intersects the normal to the boundary and the boundary,

[[-]] means for copying the intensity value from only that pixel location that belongs to a segment with a minimum contact length with the exposed region.

11. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the user explicitly restrains the area from where intensity values may be used to determine the intensity values that have to be assigned to the exposed pixels.

12. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein for an original image that has been compressed using a lossy compression technique and wherein said means for assigning ~~colour~~ color values to the exposed pixels includes:

[[-]] means for performing median filtering on the boundary pixels not belonging to the exposed region but surrounding the exposed region where the median filtering mask does not use the pixels inside the exposed region;

[[-]] means for ensuring that the pixels that are closer than a predetermined distance to the exposed region boundary are not used while determining the intensity values of the exposed pixels.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for modifying images ~~characterized in that it includes~~ having the ability to assign ~~colour~~ color intensity values to pixels exposed during image manipulation operations, said method comprising:

[[-]] using the color intensity values of remaining pixels in the original image, ~~and~~

[[-]] assigning color values to the exposed pixels that are similar to those of the surrounding pixels so that the exposed regions ~~blends~~ blend smoothly with the surrounding region[[.]], and

assigning a color value to an exposed pixel equal to the color intensity value of a mirror-

image pixel of said exposed pixel.

14. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 13, including assigning color values when the pixels are exposed as a result of manual modification of image regions by the user.

15. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 13, including assigning color values when the pixels are exposed as a result of automatic modification of said image regions.

16. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said assigning of ~~colour~~ color values assigns the value of ~~colour~~ color intensity based on the ~~colour~~ color intensity value function determined at ~~that pixel's~~ a location of said exposed pixel.

17. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein said color intensity value function used to assign values to exposed pixels is determined using the image model available a-priori.

18. (Canceled).

19. (Canceled).

20. (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said ~~assigning of colour values assigns a colour value to an exposed pixel equal to the color intensity value of its~~

mirror-image pixel is found by looking into a hypothetical mirror placed along the boundary of the exposed region.

22. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said assigning of ~~colour~~ color values segments the original image to restrict the pixels, which are used to assign intensity values to the exposed pixels by using:

[[-]] copying the intensity value from only that pixel location that belongs to the same segment as the boundary pixel which intersects the normal to the boundary and the boundary,

[[-]] copying the intensity value from only the pixel location that belongs to a segment with a minimum contact length with the exposed region.

23. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the user explicitly restrains the area from where intensity values may be used to determine the intensity values that have to be assigned to the exposed pixels.

24. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein for an original image that has been compressed using a lossy compression technique and wherein said means for assigning ~~colour~~ color values to the exposed pixels includes:

[[-]] performing median filtering on the boundary pixels not belonging to the exposed region but surrounding the exposed region where the median filtering mask does not use the pixels inside the exposed region;

[[-]] ensuring that the pixels that are closer than a predetermined distance to the exposed region boundary are not used while determining the intensity values of the exposed

pixels.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising computer readable program code stored on computer readable storage medium embodied therein for modifying images ~~characterized in that it includes~~ having the ability to assign ~~colour~~ color intensity values to pixels exposed during image manipulation operations comprising:

[[-]] computer readable program code means configured for using the color intensity values of remaining pixels in the original image, and

[[-]] computer readable program code means configured for assigning color values to the exposed pixels that are similar to those of the surrounding pixels so that the exposed regions ~~blends~~ blend smoothly with the surrounding region[[.]], and

computer readable program code means configured for assigning a color value to an exposed pixel equal to the color intensity value of a mirror-image pixel of said exposed pixel.

26. (Original) The computer program product as claimed in claim 25, including computer readable program code means configured for assigning color values to pixels exposed as a result of manual modifications of image regions.

27. (Original) The computer program product as claimed in claim 25, including computer readable program code means configured for assigning color values to pixels exposed as a result of automatic modifications of said image regions.

28. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as claimed in claim 25, wherein

said computer readable program code means configured for assigning ~~colour~~ color values assigns the value of ~~colour~~ color intensity based on the ~~colour~~ color intensity value function determined at ~~that pixel's~~ a location of said exposed pixel.

29. (Original) The computer program product as claimed in claim 28, wherein said color intensity value function used to assign values to exposed pixels is determined using the image model available a-priori.

30. (Canceled).

31. (Canceled).

32. (Canceled).

33. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as claimed in claim 25, wherein said computer readable program code means configured for assigning ~~colour~~ values assigns a ~~colour value to an exposed pixel equal to the color intensity value of its mirror-image pixel is~~ found by looking into a hypothetical mirror placed along the boundary of the exposed region.

34. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as claimed in claim 25, wherein said computer readable program code means configured for assigning ~~colour~~ color values segments the original image to restrict the pixels, which are used to assign intensity values to the exposed pixels by using:

[[-]] computer readable program code means configured for copying the intensity value from only that pixel location that belongs to the same segment as the boundary pixel which intersects the normal to the boundary and the boundary,

[[-]] computer readable program code means configured for copying the intensity value from only that pixel location that belongs to a segment with a minimum contact length with the exposed region.

35. (Original) The computer program product as claimed in claim 25, wherein the user explicitly restrains the area from where intensity values may be used to determine the intensity values that have to be assigned to the exposed pixels.

36. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as claimed in claim 25, wherein for an original image that has been compressed using a lossy compression technique and wherein said means for assigning colour color values to the exposed pixels includes:

[[-]] computer readable program code means configured for performing median filtering on the boundary pixels not belonging to the exposed region but surrounding the exposed region where the median filtering mask does not use the pixels inside the exposed region;

[[-]] computer readable program code means configured for ensuring that the pixels that are closer than a predetermined distance to the exposed region boundary are not used while determining the intensity values of the exposed pixels.